

The Parents' Union School. *D2*

(Note concerning Schools, and Classes of not less than
10 Children.)

A demand has arisen in various P.U.S. Schools and Classes that the work of each pupil should be sent up for examination and report.

This should give parents the opportunity to interest themselves in the work of the School their children attend, as they already do in that of the home schoolroom. Though this individual examination of the pupils in a school is desirable it is by no means compulsory.

Pupils in P.U.S. Schools and Classes receive separate Programmes, Examination Papers and Reports on their work on payment of *half* fees, according to the regulations for families, *i.e.*,

two guineas a year for (a) a family of one or more children under 10, or (b) one child between 10 and 12, *i.e.*, one guinea;

three guineas a year for (a) a family including *one child* over 10, or (b) one girl of 12 or over, *i.e.*, one and a half guineas;

four guineas a year for a family where *more than one* child is over 10, *i.e.*, two guineas.

The fees for the School or Class should be forwarded by the Principal of the School to the Secretary at Ambleside.

Parents should become members of the P.N.E.U. and take in the *Parents' Review* (for this apply to Miss Parish, P.N.E.U. Office, 26 Victoria Street, London, S.W.).

The Heads of Schools where the pupils are members of the P.U.S. in this way are not liable for the usual School fee.

N.B.—Pupils should wear the School colours and badge (P.N.E.U. Office).

Address,—

THE SECRETARY,
HOUSE OF EDUCATION,
AMBLESIDE.

* In the event of a pupil beginning a school year and leaving later, the membership may be passed on to another pupil a portion of the fee being deducted.

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Parents' National Educational Union

26, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.1.

Founder

Miss CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

A SHORT SYNOPSIS

OF THE

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY ADVANCED BY
THE FOUNDER OF THE
PARENTS' NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL UNION.

- "No sooner doth the truth . . . come into the soul's sight, but the soul knows her to be her first and old acquaintance."
- "The consequence of truth is great; therefore the judgment of it must not be negligent."

In so far as we hold and profess what is known as P.N.E.U. thought, three duties are before us: (a) To give earnest study to the mastery of the principles of our educational philosophy*; (b) Having mastered these, to apply them; (c) To make them known. Here follows a short summary of our principles, but it must be remembered that a knowledge of these formulæ is by no means a knowledge of the principles they aim at summing up.

1. Children are born *persons*.
2. They are not born either good or bad, but with possibilities for good and for evil.
3. The principles of authority on the one hand, and of obedience on the other, are natural, necessary and fundamental; but—
4. These principles are limited by the respect due to the personality of children, which must not be encroached upon, whether by the direct use of fear or love, suggestion or influence, or by undue play upon any one natural desire.
5. Therefore, we are limited to three educational instruments—the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas. The P.N.E.U. Motto is: "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline and a life."

* These are set forth at length in the five volumes of the *Home Education Series*, by Miss Charlotte M. Mason, published by Kegan Paul & Co., and obtainable from the P.N.E.U. Central Office, 26, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

6. When we say that "*education is an atmosphere*," we do not mean that a child should be isolated in what may be called a "child-environment" especially adapted and prepared, but that we should take into account the educational value of his natural home atmosphere, both as regards persons and things, and should let him live freely among his proper conditions. It stultifies a child to bring down his world to the "child's" level.
7. By "*education is a discipline*," we mean the discipline of habits, formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or of body. Physiologists tell us of the adaptation of brain structures to habitual lines of thought, *i.e.*, to our habits.
8. In saying that "*education is a life*," the need of intellectual and moral as well as of physical sustenance is implied. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum.
9. We hold that the child's mind is no mere *sac* to hold ideas; but is rather, if the figure may be allowed, a spiritual organism, with an appetite for all knowledge. This is its proper diet, with which it is prepared to deal; and which it can digest and assimilate as the body does foodstuffs.
10. Such a doctrine as *e.g.* the Herbartian, that the mind is a receptacle, lays the stress of Education (the preparation of knowledge in enticing morsels duly ordered) upon the teacher. Children taught on this principle are in danger of receiving much teaching with little knowledge; and the teacher's axiom is "what a child learns matters less than how he learns it."
11. But we, believing that the normal child has powers of mind which fit him to deal with all knowledge proper to him, give him a full and generous curriculum; taking care only that all knowledge offered him is vital, that is, that facts are not presented without their informing ideas. Out of this conception comes our principle that,—
12. "*Education is the Science of Relations*"; that is, that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts: so we train him upon physical

exercises, natural lore, handicrafts, science and art, and upon *many living* books, for we know that our business is not to teach him all about anything, but to help him to make valid as many as may be of—

"These first-born affinities
That fit our new existence to existing things."

13. In devising a syllabus for a normal child, of whatever social class, three points must be considered:—
 - (a) He requires *much* knowledge, for the mind needs sufficient food as much as does the body.
 - (b) The knowledge should be various, for sameness in mental diet does not create appetite (*i.e.*, curiosity).
 - (c) Knowledge should be communicated in well-chosen language, because his attention responds naturally to what is conveyed in literary form.
14. As knowledge is not assimilated until it is reproduced, children should "tell back" after a single reading or hearing: or should write on some part of what they have read.
15. A *single reading* is insisted on, because children have naturally great power of attention; but this force is dissipated by the re-reading of passages, and also, by questioning, summarising, and the like.

Acting upon these and some other points in the behaviour of mind, we find that the educability of children is enormously greater than has hitherto been supposed, and is but little dependent on such circumstances as heredity and environment.

Nor is the accuracy of this statement limited to clever children or to children of the educated classes: thousands of children in elementary schools respond freely to this method, which is based on the *behaviour of mind*.
16. There are two guides to moral and intellectual self-management to offer to children, which we may call "the way of the will" and "the way of the reason."

17. *The way of the will*: Children should be taught, (a) to distinguish between "I want" and "I will." (b) That the way to will effectively is to turn our thoughts from that which we desire but do not will. (c) That the best way to turn our thoughts is to think of or do some quite different thing, entertaining or interesting. (d) That after a little rest in this way, the will returns to its work with new vigour. (This adjunct of the will is familiar to us as *diversion*, whose office it is to ease us for a time from will effort, that we may 'will' again with added power. The use of suggestion as an aid to the will is to be deprecated, as tending to stultify and stereotype character. It would seem that spontaneity is a condition of development, and that human nature needs the discipline of failure as well as of success.)
18. *The way of the reason*: We teach children, too, not to "lean (too confidently) to their own understanding"; because the function of reason is to give logical demonstration (a) of mathematical truth, (b) of an initial idea, accepted by the will. In the former case, reason is, perhaps, an infallible guide, but in the latter, it is not always a safe one; for, whether that idea be right or wrong, reason will confirm it by irrefragable proofs.
19. Therefore, children should be taught, as they become mature enough to understand such teaching, that the chief responsibility which rests on them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of ideas. To help them in this choice we give them principles of conduct, and a wide range of the knowledge fitted to them. These principles should save children from some of the loose thinking and heedless action which cause most of us to live at a lower level than we need.
20. We allow no separation to grow up between the intellectual and "spiritual" life of children, but teach them that the divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their continual Helper in all the interests, duties and joys of life.

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Parents' National Educational Union

I wish to become a Member of the Parents' National Educational Union, and herewith enclose 15s. 6d. - Kindly furnish me with all information concerning the Branch or Area Organisation (if any) in my district.

Name.....

Address

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The Subscription (which includes both heads of the household) is 15s. 6d. per annum.

The advantages offered to Members are:—

A monthly copy of the *Parents' Review*.

A free ticket for the Annual Meeting, and free attendance at any Meetings or Lectures advertised in the *Review*, wherever they may take place.

Opportunity for co-operation and consultation between parents and teachers, who meet there on the same ground.

Opportunity to attend natural history excursions, reading circles, P.U.S. classes, musical appreciation classes. Shakespeare readings, study circles, etc., as may be arranged in the neighbourhood.

The use of the large library of educational works, which is kept at the Central Office.

The Parents' Union School; this is open to members paying special fees.

Membership involves no special duties; it is not confined to parents, all interested in education may join.

All further particulars can be had from the General Secretary, P.N.E.U., 26, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

[P.T.O.]

Parents' National Educational Union.

Founder—MISS CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

Presidents—

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUIS AND MARCHIONESS OF ABERDEEN AND TEMAIR.

Chairman of the Executive Committee—THE REV. H. COSTLEY-WHITE, M.A.

Hon. Treasurer—COL. THE HON. DOUGLAS CARNEGIE.

Hon. Sec.—THE HON. MRS. FRANKLIN.

General Secretary—MISS MORTON.

Central Office: 26, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

The Parents' National Educational Union was founded in 1887 in response to a demand from thoughtful parents, who desired to know how to give intelligent supervision and guidance to the development of their children's whole nature—physical, mental, moral and spiritual.

Its objects are:—(a) To assist parents of all classes to understand the best principles and methods of Education in all its aspects, those which concern the formation of character, as well as actual methods of teaching. (b) To create a better public feeling on the subject of the training of children, and with this object in view, to collect and make known the best information and experience on the subject. (c) To afford to parents opportunities for co-operation and consultation, so that the wisdom and experience of each day be profitable to all. (d) To stimulate their enthusiasm, through the sympathy of numbers acting together. (e) To secure greater unity and continuity of Education, by harmonizing home and school training.

The Union aims at giving opportunities for the study of educational problems, and a meeting ground for intercourse between parents, teachers, and all who are interested in Education. It offers to its members a theory and practice of Education (evolved by Miss Mason) which are found to be most successful both in families and schools of every grade. Among its Central Principles is that a religious basis of work be maintained.

The Parents' Union School. This correspondence school was devised for introducing regular work and school training into Home Schoolrooms. Children are classified according to their powers. A Time-Table and syllabus of work is set for each term in six forms (ages, six to eighteen), and at the end of the term the pupils receive Examination papers, by which the work done by each child is tested.

The distinctive curriculum of the Parents' Union School offers to the pupils a liberal education and gives them an opportunity of establishing relations with living ideas, through the study of many great books, as well as through nature, art, music, science and handicrafts.

Many hundreds of home schoolrooms and private schools all over the world and a rapidly increasing number of public elementary and secondary schools are now following the Parents' Union School programmes.

The House of Education, Ambleside, A Training College for teachers in families, Classes and Schools, working in the Parents' Union School.

The interest felt in the House of Education is widespread, and it is not possible to supply the demand for teachers trained there.